(b) whether there has been any change in Pakistan's agreeing to hold the preparatory meeting in Islamabad to finalise formalities for launching the SAPTA; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) was agreed upon on 1.1th April, 1993 at the Seventh SAARC Summit held in Dhaka.

(b) and (c) Since then, negotiations have been going on among member countries to give effect to SAPTA by finalising tariff concessions. The latest round of negotiations have just concluded in Islamabad of which the results have yet to be assessed.

Modifications in the draft declaration for World Social Summit

2463. SHRI JAGMOHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India have secured modifications in regard to eighteen points in the Draft Declaration for World Social Summit, March 6—12, 1995, Copenhagen;

(b) if so, what exactly arc these eighteen points; and

(c) what are the other points in respect of which Government of India sought modifications, but failed?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) During the Summit and in the Preparatory Process leading to it, India emphasised the following issues:

(i) The Centrality of the people and their empowerment, through inter-alia, guaranteeing of certain rights such as the rights to food, work, shelter, education, health and information; and democratic participative local self-governance as a mechanism to achieve this end.

(ii) The need to eradicate poverty, which now figures not only as a separate goal but as an underlying theme, governing action in all areas.

(iii) A focus on poverty in low income countries of Asia and Pacific and on Rural Poverty.

(iv) Cross-sectoral emphasis on gender issues which arc central to social development.

(v) Incorporation of a separate commitment on education and health, which are indispensable elements in the process of eradication of poverty.

(vi) A clear acknowledgement of terrorism as a fundamental threat to society and to global social order,

(vii) The provision of financial resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action through trade and international assistance,

(viii) Placing the role of markets in its proper perspective, through a recognition of its shortcomings and the need for Government intervention to both correct the market mechanism as well as to supplement it.

(ix) Acknowledging the negative effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes and recognising the need to ensure that they include social development goals, when structural adjustment programmes are agree to.

All the above issues put forward by India were accepted by the international community at the World Summit for Social Development and have been reflected in the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted

on March 12, 1995. There are no issues on which India had desired to seek a modification but failed to achieve it.

India's Participation in the World Summit for Social Development

2464. SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India participated in the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen (Denmark) early this month; and

(b) if so, how far this Summit attempted to resolve three of the major socio-economic problems plaguing the developing and the under developed nations, namely poverty, unemployment and social disintegration and environment, and generate resources for human development?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Summit, marks the comencement of a changed international agenda for creation of a new society. The Copenhagen Declaration adopted at the, conclusion of the Summit, contains ten commitments undertaken for the common pursuit of social development, aimed at social justice, solidarity, harmony and equality within and among countries. These pertain inter-alia, to creation of an enabling economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment; eradication of poverty; goal of full employment; promotion of social integration; education, health and culture; increasing resources allocated for social development; and improvement of international cooperation to attain these objectives. In the Programme of action detailed plans have been spelled out, both at the national and international levels, with a view to implementing the above commitments. India hopes that the Summit will reinvigorate international cooperation including generation of financial resources, in implementing the far-reaching decisions of the Summit.

Improvement in Bilateral Ties with China

2465. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to improve bilateral ties with China;

(b) if so, the details of steps taken in that regard; and

(c) the response of the Government of China thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Govcrment have continued their efforts to establish a long term, stable and good neighbourly relationship with China. The momentum of high level political dialogue between the two countries has been maintained. Steps have been taken to give more economic-technological content to the relationship. In 1994, agreements on avoidance of double taxation and resumption of banking relations were signed to facilitate the further growth of trade and investment links. Cooperation between the two countries has expanded to new areas such as petroleum, coal, health and medicines, iron and steel, civil aeronautics, which have a significant technology content. Cultural exchanges have been promoted under a bilateral cultural exchange programme. Initiatives in the cultural field include holding of a Festival of India in China and a Festival of China in India.

The two countries have continued their discussions in the Joint Working Group (JWG) to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question. An agreement on the maintenance of peace and tranquillity along the line of actual control was signed during the Prime Minister's visit to China in September 1993. Implementation measures under this